

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 IO-13 ACDA-12 OMB-01
AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 COME-00 /121 W
-----006390 131402Z /45

P R 131215Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6442
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 310
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0221

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION JANUARY 6 - 12

REF: BEIRUT 0078 (DTG 060931Z JAN 78)

1. SUMMARY: THIS WEEK PRESIDENT SARKIS SPOKE OUT AGAINST THE
PERMANENT SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON. SAEB SALAAM
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PRIASED PRESIDENT SADAT. YASIR ARAFAT WARNED PALESTINIANS THAT
THEY WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. AL
MURABITUN LEADER IBRAHIM QULAYLAT MADE HIS FIRST CALL ON
PRESIDENT SARKIS. A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE APPROVED A BILL
EXTENDING THE TERM OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR TWO YEARS. THERE
WAS LITTLE FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON. OFFICIAL STATISTICS SHOWED
BEIRUT PORT TRAFFIC REVIVED SIGNIFICANTLY IN 1977. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT SARKIS REJECTS PALESTINIAN SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON.

IN AN ADDRESS TO HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ON JANUARY 6, PRESIDENT SARKIS SAID, "LEBANON WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY TYPE OF SETTLEMENT WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO REMAIN ON ITS TERRITORY, REALIZING THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AFFECTS ITS VITAL INTERESTS AND EXCEEDS ITS CAPABILITY, IN ADDITION TO DAMAGING THE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIANS THEMSELVES" (SEE BEIRUT 0094). LEBANESE MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS ENDORSED THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS HAVE NOT CRITICIZED IT.

3. PALESTINIAN RALLY.

ADDRESSING A MARTYR'S DAY RALLY IN BEIRUT ON JANUARY 7, PLO CHIEF YASIR ARAFAT IN UNUSUALLY MILITANT TERMS SAID THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS "NEITHER AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE NOR THROUGH DEALS, BUT ONLY THROUGH FIGHTING AND BY FORCE," WAFU REPORTED. PLO OFFICIAL SALAH KHALAF, AGAIN IN UNUSUALLY STRONG TERMS, TOLD THE SAME RALLY THAT "THE USA IS AFFLICTED BY THOSE WHO CHANGE THEIR MINDS EVERY MINUTE, WITH CARTER AT THEIR HEAD."

4. SALAAM BACKS SADAT.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BEIRUT ON JANUARY 11, FORMER
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PRIME MINISTER SAEB SALAAM MADE THE FIRST PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT BY A LEBANESE MUSLIM LEADER OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE. CALLING THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT'S EFFORT "HISTORIC AND COURAGEOUS," SALAAM SAID, "I AM AMONG THOSE WHO SUPPORT HIM WITHIN LIMITS . . . TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL" AND "THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS TO SELFDETERMINATION." SALAAM ALSO ACCUSED "THE COMMUNISTS" OF BEING BEHIND RECENT BOMB ATTACKS AGAINST HIM. (THERE HAVE BEEN FOUR EXPLOSIONS NEAR THE RESIDENCE OF SALAAM IN THE LAST THREE WEEKS, THE LATEST ON JANUARY 9. HE HAS PRIVATELY ACCUSED THE SYRIANS OF BEING RESPONSIBLE AND SAID THEY WERE TAKING REVENGE FOR HIS FAILURE TO OPPOSE SADAT.)

5. QULAYLAT CALLS ON SARKIS.

THE LEADER OF THE NASSERIST AL MURABITUN IBRAHIM QULAYLAT, MADE HIS FIRST CALL ON PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS ON JANUARY 10. (ANOTHER AL MURABITUN LEADER, SAMIR SABBAGH, HAS SEEN THE PRESIDENT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.) QULAYLAT TOLD THE PRESS AFTERWARDS THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH POLITICAL RECONCILIATION SHOULD BE BUILT WITH THE PRESIDENT. (AL MURABITUN OFFICIALS HAVE SAID PRIVATELY THAT THEY WOULD ACCEPT A FORMULA BASED ON THE 1943 NATIONAL PACT.)

6. EXTENSION OF PARLIAMENT'S TERM.

ON JANUARY 9 THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE APPROVED A BILL PROVIDING FOR EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE OF THE PRESENT CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS. THE PRESENT DEPUTIES WERE ELECTED IN APRIL 1972. THEIR TERM WAS DUE TO EXPIRE IN APRIL 1976, BUT WAS EXTENDED TO APRIL 1978. THE BILL WOULD PROLONG THEIR PRESENT TERM TO APRIL 1980 (SEE DECEMBER 29 SITREP).

7. LITTLE FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON.

THERE WAS RELATIVELY LITTLE FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON OVER THE
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REPORTING PERIOD. PALESTINIANS AND CHRISTIANS IN THE AYN IBL/ BINT JUBAYL AND MARJAYOUN/KHIAM AREAS EXCHANGED SOME ARTILLERY FIRE, BUT THERE WAS NO MAJOR MOVEMENT OF GROUND FORCES, ACCORDING TO DATT SOURCES.

8. PORT TRAFFIC REVIVES.

MOVEMENT THROUGH THE PORT OF BEIRUT REVIVED REMARKABLY IN 1977 (SEE BEIRUT 0164). YEAR-END FIGURES INDICATE THAT TOTAL CARGO TONNAGE DISEMBARKED IN 1977 WAS 54 PERCENT OF THE AMOUNT IN 1974, ALTHOUGH TONNAGE LOADED WAS SHARPLY LOWER, AT ABOUT 18 PERCENT OF THE 1974 LEVEL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT00221
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780020-0500
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780168/aaaacfnp.tel
Line Count: 149
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6334fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 78
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3781984
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION JANUARY 6 - 12
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6334fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014